

Goddard has praise for county law enforcement

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KINGMAN - Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard praised the work of Mohave County law enforcement agencies during Monday morning's Board of Supervisors meeting.

He praised officers for their hard work on combating methamphetamine.

"We have a very serious drug problem throughout the state. In many ways Mohave County has had some of the pioneer experience with meth and some of the small meth labs. My office is trying very hard to work with the taskforce to try and make meth labs much more difficult to operate and eliminate them completely in the future," he said.

"We have great cooperation not from the state Legislature but from cities and towns throughout Arizona."

Currently, there are 46 towns and cities across the state that have implemented restrictions on the sale of over-the-counter cold and sinus medications. Mohave County cities Bullhead City, Lake Havasu City and Kingman have all implemented similar legislation.

"The only piece missing from this puzzle is the state of Arizona," he said.

Goddard said he is planning to make his third trip to the Legislature to petition for legislation controlling the sale of cold medication.

"It's copy-cat legislation. There's nothing new now that somebody else hasn't already done before them," he said.

Having state legislation would help shore up local law enforcement. Officers can't



Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard briefly addressed more than 80 people at a luncheon on crime and fraud prevention at the Kathryn Heidenreich Adult Center on Monday. The speech was a part of a daylong visit to Kingman by Goddard. Photo: AARON ROYSTER/Miner

always operate using local ordinances. "We have to rely on the DEA and FBI in order to enforce these restrictions from the federal side. And I really don't think FBI is going to spend a lot of time checking drug stores and convenience stores to see whether they are keeping a log," Goddard said.

He also complimented the county on the work it has done concerning the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

"I want to specifically thank the Board and the officials of Mohave County for the great work that's been done up in the northern part of the county. I think after many years we finally started to make some serious and important progress in bringing both the rule of law and the various functions of the state of Arizona, hopefully, the beneficial functions, to Colorado City. That has been a long process," he said.

He pointed specifically to the new state facility County Manager Ron Walker helped get up and running in the area.

"Occasionally, people say, 'Well, it's just a doublewide trailer.' And I respond, 'Well, that was a tough doublewide to get into the community.'

"And I think it's already had a tremendously positive effect by making sure that the state and the county have a presence. But most important, it's a symbol that we're there, we're watching, and we're there to provide help if necessary," Goddard said.

He also praised the work of the county attorney's office.

"Obviously, the work the county attorney's office has done in terms of bringing charges against some of the members for serious problems in the past, especially committed by members of the marshal's office up there, I think is again a very important step forward. When Utah is done with Warren Jeffs, I know that Mohave County will take a very appropriate opportunity to bring him before a bar of justice here in Arizona," he said.

Goddard later met in a closed-door session with Mohave County Attorney Matt Smith and county Sheriff Tom Sheahan to discuss issues related to Colorado City.

He also explained some of the work the state is doing to combat Internet predators and expressed concern about the rising rate of theft in the state, in particular, auto and identity theft.

"Arizona is, depending on the year, first or second in the nation in our per-capital loss of automobiles. There's a lot of reasons for that," he said.

The state recently put up a link that allows residents to enter the Vehicle Identification Number or license plate number of suspicious vehicles.

"It's our No. 1 most popular site on the Arizona Attorney General's Web site by a factor

of two or three each month. So I hope people are using it in neighborhood associations to increase the eyes and ears of law enforcement, to be able to find those stolen cars. I think it will take some of the profit and security out of the business of stealing cars," Goddard said.

Identity theft, especially targeting seniors, is also a major concern of the state, he said. Supervisor Tom Sockwell asked if the county or state could do anything to stop the recent phone, e-mail and regular mail scams.

Goddard said most of the scams are run by offshore companies, which places them outside of the state's and the county's jurisdiction.

"They're incredibly successful," he said. He pointed to two specific scams that have tricked several people. One is an individual in Africa who needs to send money to the United States, the other concerns the Canadian or Spanish Lottery.

The African one asks the recipient to send them a bank account number in order to send the funds. Goddard said one very wealthy businessman in California recently fell prey to the scam. The man even traveled to Africa to check out the story before sending the account information.

The lottery scam involves a victim receiving a cashier's check in the mail from someone claiming the victim has won the lottery in another country. All the victim has to do is cash the check and then send a personal check to the company to claim their winnings. The false company gains the victim's account number and quickly drains their account of any money.

The only way to combat these types of fraud is to educate the public, Goddard said.